

A LETTER FROM DR. SEAN LUCAS

January 17, 2019

My dear Friends:

For several reasons, I'm so looking forward to our spring semester of Sunday Evening Praise, which begins this Sunday night, January 20, at 6:00 p.m. One reason is that I'm grateful for our session's leadership in embracing the principle that the whole church worships with the whole church's worship. To have a service that is markedly different in liturgy structure and yet that is still recognizably IPC is a great gift. It is also a great gift to be able to learn new hymn tunes and new spiritual songs, many of which also find their way into our Sunday morning worship services as well. And also, I appreciate the opportunity to have the Lord's Supper twice a month; we believe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is an effectual means of our salvation. Since that is the case, it would make sense for us to have the Supper more frequently so that we might receive more grace from the Lord as we pursue him.

I'm also looking forward to our theme: "Children of the Heavenly Father: The Bible's Doctrine of Sonship." What does it mean that we are God's sons and daughters? How does the Bible talk about this—is this a minor or a major theme in Scripture? How should this theme shape my understanding of myself in relationship to God, my discipleship, my life in this world? How does the idea of sonship ground my ultimate hopes? All of these questions, and more besides, will be answered on Sunday nights. I love the opportunity to do this kind of biblical-theological approach where we trace a theme through Scripture or a section of Scripture; I trust that it will prove an encouragement to you as you continue to love this God who delights to call you, "My child."

A couple of weekends ago, our officers gathered for their annual retreat. Our theme was prayer—developing daily habits of personal prayer and developing a heart for Kingdom-centered prayer. It was such an encouragement to hear Dr. Cole Huffman from First Evangelical Church in Memphis teach us and to pray together as officers. My deep longing is that we would be a congregation that delights to be in God's presence in conversation with him through prayer and in communion with him through corporate worship. That's what it looks like to love God more today than we did yesterday, more tomorrow than today; to grow to delight in his presence as we pray.

As a pastoral staff, we hope to roll out several things this year to help us along this line: from prayer requests as part of our weekly discussion questions for Grace Groups to developing a weekly Scripture and prayer guide to assist us in praying for ourselves and for the Kingdom's advance. Through all of this, I'm convinced that God desires to bring revival and renewal to our city—and he wants to start with us, to draw us into a deepening relationship with him, to cast us upon him in dependence and surrender. That will start with prayer—daily, personal, Kingdom-focused. Will you join me, and our officers, in praying in this way?

In the grip of God's grace,



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